

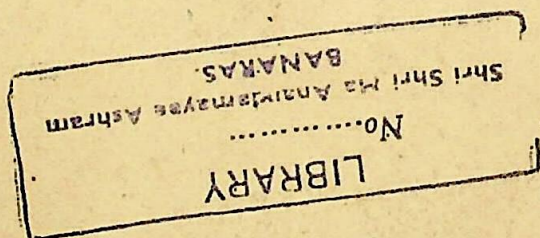
# EAST AND WEST SERIES

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## GURU GOBIND SINGH



## T. L. VASWANI



# EAST AND WEST SERIES

[ Monthly ]

An Interpreter of the Life of the Spirit

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GURU GOBIND SINGH

9/237

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## MESSAGES AND BLESSINGS

I find wonderful upliftment from the booklets of the *East and West Series*, and I am wholeheartedly in agreeance with you in regard to the wrongs of our educational, social and economic systems.

I have found much knowledge and wisdom in your writings; and I love the feeling of brotherhood and understanding which you so dearly express.

I enjoyed the booklet on "Jesus" very much. I like to think of the living Jesus, the living Christ. To my mind, most of the orthodox churches have distorted the truth and they hark back too much into the history of the past instead of applying the principles and instruction into daily living. They have lost the gem, but still worship the case which holds it.

I love the simplicity and the beauty in your writing and specially did the booklet (No. 73), *Sri Rama : The Beloved of Aryavarta*, make a great impression on me. It was so full of the sweetness of life, of beauty and spirituality.

Thank you so very greatly for your wonderful loving-kindness and for all that you do for the upliftment of mankind. You are a great light. And may God bless your work !

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## FOREWORD

IN a world of struggle and strife, a world of hunger and unending wars, he appeared,—the Prophet. He appeared like a flame bringing to all the blessed message of the One God of Peace,—the *Akala Purukha*, the Eternal Saviour of Humanity.

In Guru Gobind Singh's heart was the Great Master,—Guru Nanak, the Beloved. Therefore was all humanity in Guru Gobind Singh's heart. There was in it no ache of self, no pain of separateness. He gave all his self away. He received in his heart the Master Nanak, and into it flowed the whole universe.

"The wise man does not lay up treasures," said the great Rishi of China, Laotse. In the hallowed heart of Guru Gobind Singh, the only treasure was Guru Nanak and the great Guru's vision of the Universal,—the One in all,—the One in all classes and communities, in all races and religions.

His actions flowed from his heart. It was an angel-heart. It was a reflection of the Mother Heart of the Universe. So he stood by the weak and down-trodden, the poor and the forlorn. Listen to what he says to all who would hear :—

*Do they look down on you ?  
Do they say you are of low birth ?  
I shall clothe you in fair garments of joy !  
I shall invoke the Fire of Heaven  
To mingle with your blood ?  
Are you not mine own,—  
The chosen children of my Master ?*

One day, Guru Gobind Singh asked for a cup of water. A nobleman's son offered him water in a shining cup. He was a young man : he was handsome : his hands were clean. But the Guru returned the cup, and the young man looked wonderingly into the Guru's eyes.

Then said the great Guru :—"O young man! it is true, your cup is a shining one and your looks are handsome and your hands are clean. But they have not laboured in the service of the saints. Make your hands pure first! And they will be purified through humility. Cast aside all caste-pride! Be pure! Be a servant of the poor ones! And I shall drink of the water in your cup."

Guru Gobind Singh was a poet : he was a seer, too. He was a hero and a patriot of the purest ray serene. To lowly acts of service he bent his hands to labour and to earn his daily bread. In that last period of his life, of which I seldom can think without tears in my eyes, he realised the dignity of manual labour. He realised that labour was worship. He realised, too, that they are truly blessed of whom God accepts the *yagna* of suffering and isolation, of agony and tears.

With the last benediction of his earth life, he left to his disciples the Book Beloved, the *Guru Granth Sahib*, saying :—"Today, the *bani*, the Word, is your Master, your Guru." Yes,—the living spirit of the Gurus speaketh, today, in the words of this Ever-living Book, this inspired testament of the Saints. When I read it in holy silence or in the presence of a few believers, I say to myself :—"Is not this Book a revelation of the *Akala Purukha* to us all who are lost in the *maya* of life?"

I believe that if the living Word, the *bani* of the Gurus and the Saints, the Seers and Sages of India and humanity, of all climes and races, could re-inspire the Sikh Faith, it would indeed become a living faith and its message would



thrill India again, from end to end. This may not be until we are filled with the child-like spirit of the Sikh village-folk and their great Teachers, the Sikh Gurus, the Saints and the *Bhaktas* of India.

Like Guru Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh drew together all the castes into one brotherhood. And the rich and the poor combined to form one fraternity, one mighty union of service and sacrifice,—a living witness to one God. Guru Gobind Singh's dream, in building the Khalsa, was this divine dream of building a new race of humanity nourished by love.

Simple rules of life did Guru Gobind Singh give to the Khalsa whom, indeed, he loved with the love of his Mother Heart. Some of these rules were :—

*Eat little,  
Sleep little,  
Love compassion,  
And serve the poor!*

\*

*Forget not this,—  
Thy home, my child !  
Is not a palace,  
But a forest, a tapobana !  
So live as an anchorite at heart !*

Did not Jesus say to his disciples :—

*This world is a bridge :  
Pass over it,  
But do not build on it !*

Guru Gobind Singh dedicated his life to the service of the poor. He stood up,—in courage unsurpassed in the history of our nation,—to challenge a power which many thought was omnipotent. Wounded was he, again and

again, in his fight for India's freedom,—the fight for the poor and forlorn. But he rose again and he fought again. The fear of fear fell from him. For the flame of His Presence touched his heart, and he declared :—"His Grace hath made me fearless!"

Guru Gobind Singh hath written his name in sacrifice. It is a name which shines as a star in Heaven. In moments of meditation I have often said to myself :—By what small things we die! Goliath died by a stone. Krishna by a little arrow of a huntsman. Christ by a kiss. Guru Gobind Singh was stabbed by an ungrateful man whom the great Guru forgave. And meditating on him, I have said to myself, again and again :—"Happy, indeed, are the few, the chosen few, who gave their all in service and sacrifice and who, in giving their all, found the One Supreme in whom East and West are one!"

T. L. VASWANI



## THE BELOVED

HE has his shining place in the galaxy of the great Heroes of Humanity.

Three centuries have passed, since he wrought the wonder of his life. A Brother of the poor and persecuted, he became a Saviour of Hindusthan, a Liberator of India.

I marvel at his greatness. His life was brief. Born in 1666, he passed on in 1708, at the age of forty-two. He built the Free Khalsa State in the love of God and man. In a letter to his opponent, the Moghul king of India, Aurangzeb, the great Guru said :—"You look to your kingdom and wealth : I turn to the immortal kingdom of God!"

The great Guru came in a period of darkness and despair in our history. One prayer, one cry and one curse against the tyranny of the State filled India, from end to end. Aurangzeb was simple and pure in private life : but he had a sectarian mind. He thought of winning heaven by converting Hindus to Islam : and he came to believe in conversion by force. Much did the Hindus suffer. Guru Gobind Singh was one of those truly great ones who appear, again and again, in history, to pour out their strength as a sacrifice to nourish the weak and needy.

A western critic has compared him to Napoleon. The comparison is not correct. Napoleon was a great soldier, a great military general. Guru Gobind Singh was a warrior-saint. Without an equal, perhaps, was Napoleon in his control of conditions and circumstances. He dashed across the desert. He flung his armies against the gate of the Orient. He smote to feverish activity slothful Europe. He infused millions with the electric force of a revolution. He became the master of Europe at thirty-

two! But at what cost? They called him "the Great Unloved," as Guru Gobind Singh they called "the Great Beloved"! Napoleon was drunk with power : Guru Gobind Singh walked in humility, moved in the presence of the Supreme, and regarded himself as a servant of God called to go, from place to place, to sow in the hearts of men "the seed of the Eternal." In his autobiography, *Vichitra Natak*, Guru Gobind Singh says :—

*I think of Him who transcendeth time and space :  
I see Him looking at me,  
And I do as He beckons me to do :  
I come singing His Name!  
And I go sowing the seed of the Eternal!*

Napoleon strode the world like a Colossus, and he failed! Guru Gobind Singh found his joy and strength in taking "shelter at the feet of God."

Guru Gobind Singh stands out among the most dynamic of India's men. Yet he stood for sometime remote from actual life. His instincts were those of a *bhakta*, and his perceptions were those of a poet. "I have come," he sang, "to behold the wonders of the world."

He was a mystic and loved to have quiet communion with God. He was in his meditations on the Hem Kuta mountains, when there came to him a call from the Depths :—"My son! invoke the Holy Name and resist the evil-doers!" The call converted his life into tremendous action. The *bhakta*, the poet, the lover of the beautiful, the dweller in silence and seclusion, the singer of the wonder of the world became a practical man. He became a leader of men, a builder of new Hindusthan.

Guru Gobind Singh came down from the mountains to the plains, where raged a conflict between the Moghul king and his oppressed Hindu subjects. A life of suffering was



the Guru's : but his heart knew no fear. "I declare to the world what the Lord has told me," he said, and he added :—"I shall not be silent through fear of mortals." In yet another song he sang :—"Thou turnest men like myself from grass blades into great mountains."

How singularly free was his life from that egotism which often lurks hidden in men of action ! He regarded himself a servant of the people. His love flowed out to the poor and weak : it shielded them : it suffered for them : and it worked a revolution in Indian history.

What magic was there in his words, his mere presence, his face divine? He transformed meek men into fearless lion-hearted warriors of the Light ! The very Himalayas were a part of his soul ! In his period of wandering, after the battle of Chamkor, he halted in the Lakhi jungle. His disciples gathered round him there, in hundreds and thousands. There, he composed a pathetic song which, even today, brings tears to the eyes of Sikh disciples :—

*They heard the call of the Beloved.  
And they came running, running :  
They came crying to the Master !  
Even as runs the scattered herd of buffaloes,  
Dropping the half-chewn grass from their mouths,  
So ran to him the disciples,  
On hearing his voice,—  
The enchanting voice of the Beloved !*

Such men have appeared but at rare intervals in history,—men, who could almost command the very forces of nature and stir the very stones to life ! What a relief, a consolation, a source of strength must he have been to thousands and thousands of those who heard his name in that dark day of our history,—the day of Moghul domination and Hindu helplessness ! Hope blended with courage in the

hearts of his people, when they thought :—"We are not orphans on the earth: this master man lives!"

Sikh history is a wonderful record of sufferings endured for faith and freedom. Once, according to a Sikh story, a new musket was brought as a present to Guru Gobind Singh. He said,—in good humour, one may be sure,—that he wanted to try the musket on some one's forehead. He paused to know if anyone of his followers would offer himself for the trial. Quick came up a number of Sikhs, each one regarding it a privilege to meet death at the Guru's hand! His disciples were trained in a school of hardship : they believed that life must not be hoarded but poured out as a sacrifice.

What makes the Sikh records almost unique in the world's annals is the number of women and young men and boys who entered into the Sikh struggle for freedom. How cheerfully they suffered privations, persecutions, even death! The four sons of the Guru were arrested but were promised release on condition that they would leave their father. What did they say? "We shall stand by our father and resist *adharmā*!" It was a painful death they were subjected to. They were bricked up alive! To the last they stood, with divine defiance in their eyes, and said :—"Do thy business, tyrant! We are happy!" And their last aspiration was breathed out in the beautiful prayer :—"Thy will be done, O God!" They practised the lesson taught them by the Guru :—"Meditate on Him in your heart!" And so they found the strength to suffer for faith and glorify God in the midst of isolation and agony. They were boys of tender age.

Many others, too, suffered cruel deaths in the mighty struggle for freedom led by Guru Gobind Singh. Boys became martyrs and simple, rough peasants became patriots. Even women fought in Guru Gobind Singh's battles. They fought and were wounded : they rejoiced in their sufferings.



Whence came to them the strength to suffer heroically?  
In one of his hymns, Guru Nanak sings :—

*Go to God in thy troubles! Meditate on His Name!*

*Repeat thou His Name,—and He will save thee!*

This teaching of "going to God" sank into the soul of the Khalsa. The word "Khalsa" means "pure." Pure, not puritan. The pure in heart see God. And only the pure of purpose and strong of resolve can win freedom. Wiser was the Guru than many a modern politician who asks for abolition of religion. The Guru realised that religion was a dynamic power. The Khalsa could have achieved little but for the power of dynamic, purifying, transforming, character-building religion inspired by worship of God and service of the poor.

The history of the Sikh Faith is full of illustrations of the vitality of religious idealism. Suffering strengthens the man who worships the Ideal. The Khalsa became all the purer, stronger, richer in faith and character for their training in the school of dedication to the Divine Will,—the school of danger and sacrifice. The hearts and minds of Sikh men and women were revolutionised by the power of faith. It taught the Sikhs to build a New Order. The Khalsa became One Family in the Guru for the service of the poor, the service of India. And the poor peasants, who rallied round the Guru, worked greater wonders than have been achieved, in our days, by peasants of Russia.

In the Guru's message patriotism was blended with religion. He regarded himself as a servant and a soldier of God. He realised that he was a "son of the Immortal God" sent into the world to make religion practical by protecting the poor and resisting wrong. "He that findeth his life shall lose it : and he that loseth his life for My sake shall find it." In the service of God and the Nation, the Guru lost his life, and in losing it has found it in Him,—the *Akala Purukha*, the Eternal that ages not!

## A KNIGHT OF THE SPIRIT

THE greatness of the world is false and fleeting. True greatness is given to a few. After reviewing the history of his times in India and the West, I arrive at the conclusion that Guru Gobind Singh was the world's greatest man in the seventeenth century.

He was a practical mystic. He became a saviour of India by breaking the force of Moghul imperialism and building up the Khalsa. I gaze at his picture and say to myself :—"Here is a figure of supreme beauty!" For in him humility was blended with service and both were kindled with the light of faith in God,—the great Saviour of the nations.

The Guru was born, in 1666, at Patna. Looking back through the vista of these three centuries, can you picture to yourself the Guru and the India of his days ? India disunited : India oppressed : Akbar's dream murdered by his successors : and Guru Gobind Singh the very picture of sadness! Iron has entered his soul. But he weaves it into a great vision,—the vision of a Free Khalsa. The word "Khalsa" means the "pure." And the "pure" in heart become the servants of God and the prophets of freedom. When the "Khalsa" soul is purified, new missionaries and new martyrs will arise, until the destiny of the Khalsa is fulfilled.

The Khalsa was meant by the Guru to be a symbol of true democracy. Members of the Khalsa dined together and worshipped together. The one great vow taken by every member of the Khalsa was "service." Today, many think of democracy in terms of power rather than service. The Khalsa was a Brotherhood,—of service. Power will not



solve the world's problems, but the spirit of service will,—the spirit of fellowship, the spirit of love and sacrifice.

To me Guru Gobind Singh is wider than any creed : and his temple in the heart within is purer than our sanctuaries. Meek was he and content with obscurity : he had no restless desire for earth's honours, for distinction and eminence,—so common, alas! in what the world calls "great men."

In loneliness and meekness he spends his time on a mountain-height, away from crowds, with no desire for popular applause. India, alas! was then a subject-nation, and Hindu homes were subject to oppression and suffering.

To Gobind Singh comes, one day, a Voice on the mountain-heights :—"Gobind! Gobind! how long will you dwell in solitude? Must you always walk in meekness and meditation? Are there not moments, hours, periods, when men, countries, nations must arise? Gobind! Arise!" To Gobind comes the call similar to Krishna's call to Arjuna on the Kurukshetra :—"Uttishta! Parantapa!" "Arjuna! Arise!"

Blessed is Gobind. To him comes the call :—"Uttishta!" "Arise!" He responds to the call :—"Thy servant standeth,—a sacrifice to Thee, O Lord!"

Gobind descends from the mountain-height to the plain below. Gobind arises to be the saviour of Hindusthan. Gobind becomes a "perfect sacrifice" to the *Sat Sri Akal*, the True One, the Deathless One. Gobind fulfils the destiny of his life.

He was so humble : and he had love for the poor. When he was at the height of his glory, when even the Moghul king sought his friendship, the great Guru did not forget to serve the poor, mountain-people. How humble and, therefore, how truly great!

At whose feet and in whose *sanga* did the great Guru learn the lesson of humility? He met and served many *dervishes*

and *fakirs* : but he who influenced the Guru's life the most was his beloved father,—Guru Teg Bahadur. Did not Gobind say to his father, when the Kashmiri *pandits* came to him :—"Who else is purer than you, my father?" Yes,—on Guru Gobind Singh's life was the blessing of his martyred father.

Guru Gobind Singh was a scholar and a poet : but there have been greater scholars and poets. He was a leader : he carried on his fight with skill and courage : but not alone for his leadership do we remember him. Power and authority pass away. Resources and riches had he at his disposal when at the height of his glory : but not for his wealth is he truly great : much greater wealth has been possessed by others. For one thing and for one thing alone we count him great. His life was filled with the spirit of sacrifice.

Cleverness and tricks do not make history. It is the sacrificial men who build history. Guru Gobind Singh is great for his absolute self-surrender to God and his wonderful sacrifice. Every day we recite the prayer :—"Nanak das sada kurbani!" "Nanak, Thy servant, is ever a sacrifice to Thee!" But what do we sacrifice everyday? Guru Gobind Singh's was a perfect sacrifice. We may not reach his height, but some sacrifice we can do everyday. Small sacrifices let us offer everyday, and our lives will be ennobled, enriched, sanctified, abundantly blessed!

Look around you! Nation jealous of nation, armies and fleets arrayed, one against the other! Survey the communities : see how one quarrels with another! See the strifes of the ambitious! Behold oppression, pain, suffering,—the tears and tragedy of the poor and weak. Then behold the tear-touched face of Guru Gobind Singh. Arrayed against him is the imperial might of the Moghul : he faces it as a hero among men, as a servant of his people. There are times when he is lonely,—cut off from his wife and



friends, cut off from the brave Khalsa,—and he looks for a hiding place from the storm. But in his solitude and loneliness he is not alone. The *Akala Purukha* is with him, is by him. He fights under the flag of the *Sat Sri Akal!* Nothing can shatter his dream of a new Society, a new India. Nothing can break his new Community, the brave Khalsa, bound together by faith and brotherly love.

Guru Gobind Singh's sons,—all the four,—die martyrs : not one denies his faith in God and the great Guru. Not one withdraws his allegiance to the Khalsa. Let the body perish : let not faith vanish! To this truth Guru Gobind Singh bears witness in the darkest hours of his earth-life.

The Guru lies on his bed of illness. A Pathan comes saying he would be a member of the Khalsa brotherhood and would serve the Guru. The Pathan is really come to find an opportunity to murder the Master. Cordially is the Pathan received and, day by day, the Pathan serves the Guru. So Judas kisses Jesus before betraying his Master.

The Pathan, at last, gets the long looked for opportunity. The Guru is on his bed of illness. By him is the Pathan,—all alone. And the Pathan swiftly strikes the fatal blow!

And the Guru, what does he do? The Guru looks on! The Guru gazes at the murderer. Not a word, not a gesture of reproach comes from the great Guru. He but looks on the man, saying :—"Let him off! I forgive thee!"

Strong was he in life, and serene was he in death. Blessed be his name! He shines among the Immortals of History!

## SONS OF NANAK

MANY years ago, I spoke of Guru Gobind Singh as a "Liberator" of India. The Sikhs call him their "Deliverer."

Under his leadership, Anandpur, which was founded by Guru Tegh Bahadur, truly became a city of *ananda*, divine bliss, immortal joy. At Anandpur, around the great Guru, assembled poets and painters, artists and scholars, singers and students of Sanskrit and Hindi lore.

Anandpur became a centre where all castes were blended in one Brotherhood, one Fellowship, and all creeds were fused in the one creed of service and sacrifice.

A *kalal*,—a wine-distiller,—comes one day for the Guru's *darshana* and stands at a distance : for the caste of *kalals* was hated.

When the Guru sees him, he says :—"Come near and sit in the assembly."

The man hesitates and says:—"Sir! How can I sit here? I am a *kalal*!"

And the Guru tells him :—"Come in, by all means! You are not a *kalal* : you are *Guru ka lal*,—a ruby of the Master!"

At Anandpur, Guru Gobind Singh revolves in his mind the thought of how the "disciple" may become a channel of the spirit and message of Guru Nanak. Guru Gobind Singh is the tenth Guru. And he, the tenth Guru, must soon depart. And after the tenth, what was to become of the Sikhs? How were they to transmit to India's millions the great message and life-force of the Great Master? They lived in difficult days. How were they to meet the challenge of Aurangzeb and his enemies? The Sikhs must become new. To them the pomp and power of earthly kings must become ashes and dust. They must go forward to die for



the oppressed, the lowly and the lost.

Guru Gobind Singh sends out a word to his disciples to gather together on the Vaisakhi Day at Anandpur. And when they have gathered together from many parts, he rises,—a naked sword in his hand! Many of them are frightened! Guru Gobind Singh then says :—“How many of you are ready to die beneath the stroke of this sword? To die that others may live! How many?”

Alas! softness has entered the life of the Sikh community. “How many?” An answer to this throbs in centuries of India’s agitated history.

“How many?” The Great Guru asks again :—“Which of you are ready to perish by my sword that others may live?”

Only one brave Sikh stands up, then comes forward and, in deep reverence, says :—“Master! this head be thine for ever! To perish by thy steel is a joy for ever!”

On a little mound is pitched a tent : into it enters the Guru and he is followed by the blessed disciple.

Soon the Master comes out of the tent with his sword stained in blood and says :—“Is another ready? One more disciple ready to die that others may live?”

And five times does the Guru call and five Sikhs step forward,—ready to die that others may live! And the Guru takes them, one by one, to the tent and every time comes out with his sword streaked in blood!

The five were ready to die : not one is dead! Not one has been slain by the Guru’s sword! The five have changed their clothes in the tent. The five are decked in saffron turbans and in saffron-dyed garments. The five have worn the same dress as the Guru. The five, the *Panch Piyaras*, the Beloved Five, now come out of the tent with the Beloved Guru. The five are radiant as the Guru! The five look as the five faces of the one Guru!

And now is ready the nectar (*amrita*),—the sanctified

water in which the Guru has poured the *mantram* of *shakti*,—the song of the sword :—

*Eternal God! Thou art our shield :  
The dagger, knife, the sword we wield!  
To us protection Thou dost give :  
In Thee, the Deathless Lord, we live!  
Unvanquished, Holy Steel! Thy might!  
We ne'er are far from sacred sight!  
Thou Holy Steel! Protector brave!  
Thou wilt for e'er Thy servants save!*

The Guru's mother, then, pours her sugar-crystals into the water,—the *amritam*,—and sweetens the nectar. In the Sikh is blended heroism with the gentleness, the sweetness of the mother-heart. The Sikh knight is a soldier and a *bhakta*,—the two in one!

The nectar is held in a steel vessel. The Guru stands erect : the knight kneels on his left knee and looks up to the Guru, drinking in the light that flows out from the Master's face. The Master gazes into the eyes of the knight, then pours on his face the nectar, and asks him to sing the *mantram* :—

*Wah Guru ji ka Khalsa :  
Sri Wah Guru ji ki fateh!*

To the Blessed Master belong the Chosen Ones, the Khalsa!

Glory! Glory! to His Name!

Every hair of the disciple's head is then filled with the nectar. Blessed be the Khalsa who, with every hair of his head, sings the Song of the Guru,—the Song of the Sacred Steel!

Guru Gobind Singh, then, asks the Beloved Five to drink the nectar from the same steel cup!



Then, looking deep into their faces, the Guru says :—

*Ye are the sons of Nanak!  
Ye are the Akala Purukha's own!  
Verily, ye are the Chosen Ones!  
I name you the Khalsa!*

*Disciples of Song are ye,  
And your destiny it is  
To be the saviours of man !*

*Ye shall own no property :  
Ye shall hold all  
As a trust for the Master's work!  
And ye shall love man as man :  
For ye shall be servants of Humanity!*

*And ye shall know no caste, no creed :  
And ye shall keep alive this Flame of New Life,  
And the Flame shall not flicker!*

*And ye shall worship, in deep meditation,  
The One Imperishable Spirit!  
And ever purified shall you be in the dhyanam of your Master.*

*And in the days, even of your greatest danger or difficulty,  
Ye shall not forget the Holy Names of your History,—  
Nanak and Angad, Amardas and Ramdas,  
Arjun Dev and Har Gobind Shah,  
Har Rai Sahib, Har Kishen and Teg Bahadur,—  
Immortal all, destined to live from age to age!  
In these Holy Names is the rosary I give you!*

*And forget not this  
That ye shall not pray, each for himself,  
But all for all,—  
All for the whole Khalsa!*

*And in each one of you shall live the whole Brotherhood.  
For know ye this,  
That ye, the sons of Nanak, are my sons, too,  
In flesh and in spirit!*

Then does the Guru ask the Beloved Five to prepare again the nectar and to annoint others with it.

And the Beloved Five sit in a group and prepare the nectar. And the Guru is the first to offer himself to be annointed with the nectar and, from the hands of the Beloved Five, the Guru drinks the *amritam*. And the Guru's name is changed from Gobind Rai to Gobind Singh. The Guru is become a *chela* : the Master shines radiant as a disciple.

And the joyous chorus exclaims :—"Sat Sri Akal!" "The Deathless is the True!" "The Timeless One is the Only Reality!"

And thousands of Sikhs are annointed. There is the birth of the Khalsa,—the new order of knights, the new order of *bhakta*-soldiers, saluting God with the sword and reciting the *mantram* of *Wah Guru*.

The vows the Khalsa vowed were the seed of a new society, a new order of sons and daughters who went forth singing to serve and suffer, singing,—to die! Again and again, have I meditated on the Khalsa vows and aspirations. I wished these were inscribed on tablets and passed on from school to school, from college to college, from group to group of students and youngmen, eager to serve India in these difficult days! The Khalsa vows and aspirations, I sum up in the following words :—

*I am thine, O Guru!  
And death to me is naught!  
For all to me is He,—  
The Eternal One!*

*I seek not the kingdom of power :*



*And I have turned my face away  
From the glitter of gold.*

*I lust not for the beauty of woman.  
Nothing, nothing on earth do I own :  
Nothing do I claim for myself :  
For all belongeth to the Lord!*

*I give, I serve, I suffer in joy :  
I rejoice as I take this body of flesh  
To the sacrificial altar,  
For the sake of my Guru,  
My Community and my Country.*

*In joy I go forward :  
In joy I die for others :  
In joy I expire,  
Singing the Nama, the Name of the Lord!  
In joy I suffer for others :  
And I long to see them saved from misery,  
In this world of sordid money-making.*

*And this be my prayer,—  
That I may die  
For the glory of the Guru's Song,—  
The Song that never dies,  
But ever grows in Light and Beauty  
Of the Blessed One!*

The creation of the Khalsa I regard as the crowning achievement of the great Gurus. In them was incarnated, again, the Eternal in our history. And today? A new age is knocking at your door today, ye sons and daughters of Nanak and Gobind! Awake! And offer the New Age the worship of sacrifice and of the Faith your fathers kept! Awake! And let the God in you grow!

## THE RIDER ON THE WHITE HORSE

THERE is in my mind a picture, which is an adaptation of a picture by a well-known artist.

In it I see a figure of beauty and strength, riding a glorious white horse and marching on. Below are (1) a learned scholar, (2) a rich merchant, and (3) a simple peasant. The scholar is absorbed in books. The merchant is absorbed in wares and gains. Only the simple peasant looks up, welcoming the Vision that cometh from the rider on the white horse!

Do I exaggerate if I say that the creation of the Khalsa was the crowning achievement of Guru Gobind Singh? The Khalsa was a call to the Sikh Community and the Indian people. Not many heard the call of the Beloved. The "rider" (in the picture) "on the glorious, white horse," I love to think of as Guru Gobind Singh. Scholars did not hear his call : they were absorbed in reading dead leaves of a dead past. Nor did rich merchants hear the Master's call. They were absorbed in thoughts of goods and gains, absorbed in gathering the pearls and rubies of the earth.

But simple peasants heard the call of the Guru. Their privilege it was to look up! The vision of the Beloved, "the rider on the glorious, white horse," passed into the hearts of some of these simple peasants. They heard the call : they answered it! They were among the builders of the destiny of the great Sikh Community.

The true Khalsa was, essentially, a man of renunciation and devotion,—a man of *tyaga* and *bhakti*. When these two meet together, life flowers into dedication. The true Khalsa was a man of dedicated life. His dedication was not in a spirit of asceticism, but of rich joy springing from the heart.

There is a story told us of how, one day, a group of



*sanyasins* meets the great Guru at Anandpur,—the centre of his activities and worship, his songs and his service to the poor and broken ones. The *sanyasins* complain to the Guru. "Your disciples are not men of renunciation," they say.

And the Guru's reply to the *sanyasins* is significant. He says :—"The Khalsa are men of renunciation : but they renounce in joy! (1) They are free. (2) They are pure : they are not dominated by *maya*. (3) They give from day to day, they ever give their time, their strength, their service to the Community. But they give in joy!" "Every day," the Guru says, "here, in our centre of work and worship at Anandpur, every day is to us a New Year's Day."

And when the Guru's call went forth at Anandpur :—"Is there one in your midst who would come out and say, I am ready to die?" the Sikh, who boldly stood up to answer the call, did it in joy. The "Five Beloveds" of the Guru,—they who, with the Guru, became the first builders of the Khalsa,—revealed the spirit of joy in their service and sacrifice. Rightly were they named the "Chosen Ones," the "Disciples of Song."

ON a Vaisakhi Day, I walked to a garden. What loveliness filled the rose and the lily! Every tree longed to lose itself in the sunrise! And every bird announced in song the new love of life. Around me I saw renewed in nature the eternal miracle of life and I sang the Guru's words :—

*Keep alive this Flame of New Life :  
And let not the Flame flicker!*

When, in answer to the Beloved's Call, the Khalsa was born, there was, methinks, the re-birth of the Hindu race,—in the darkness of that New Dawn in our history.

In this message of the Guru was born the Khalsa, the new order of wandering knights, the new order of *bhaktas* and

servants of India, going forth, saluting God in the poor and lowly and reciting the *mantram* of "*Wahguru*"!

The Khalsa felt he existed for no other purpose than this one of serving the Guru and being an instrument of his work. "I am thine, O Guru!" he said; "and death is naught to me." The Khalsa never regarded himself alone. He lived for the Guru and, therefore, for the Community and the Country, for the poor and lowly, for the weak and down-trodden. "I ask for no kingdom of power," the Khalsa said; "I seek no shining gold. I rejoice to die for others. I rejoice to die, singing His Name."

How many among my dear brothers, the Sikhs of today, have we the Khalsas of the great Guru's days? Today, alas! I see the temples and places of worship hoarding wealth, when millions are unable to buy daily bread. Today, alas! I see descendents of simple, strong men stand as beggars at alien doors, clinging to creeds of comfort, quenching the Flame of Sacrifice.

Blessed, indeed, was the Vaisakhi Day, when the Khalsa sprang into life out of the vision of him who "rode the white horse" of truth and service. A few poor, simple Sikhs answered his Call. They became silent servants or wandering knights of India's new destiny. In them was incarnated again the Eternal in our history.

And today? Today, alas! my heart is filled with unspeakable sadness, as I look around and find that India is empty. Yet, here and there, in some lonely corner, far from the madding crowds of our cities which are soulless and our shrines which have dethroned the Gurus and the Saints and their immortal vision,—in some quiet villages, some peasants are active still in the service of India's Heroes and Sages. And to every such disciple, to every true Khalsa, to every humble servant of India, I say:—"Thou, too, art my brother!"



## PICTURES

I regard Guru Gobind Singh as an immortal of history. Why? Money is dust : earth's honours are fleeting : knowledge is power. But yet a greater power is sacrifice.

Guru Gobind Singh's name is radiant in history. Why? He sacrificed his all in the struggle for freedom. His four sons were ordered to execution by Aurangzeb and died heroically. The Guru's wife could not save her children nor help her husband,—and she sacrificed her life by suspending her breath. The Guru himself, returning from the last battle he had fought, with his wounds half-healed, took up his bow to fight again when his blood burst out and, with his last breath, he bowed to *Guru Granth Saheb*, saying :—“So doth the *Akala Purukha* ordain! The Song of *Nama* is the Master now!”

\*

In the silence of the mountain he heard the call :—“Gobind! great is India's agony. Life is given to be shared. Blessed are they who would offer God the noblest worship which is sacrifice!”

Gobind leaves the silence and solitude of the mountain : Gobind comes down to the plains to serve the people. His life becomes an offering of sacrifice.

The Guru's life may be reviewed under these three aspects :—(1) the Guru as a Poet; (2) the Guru as a Saint; and (3) the Guru as an Organiser. The one central idea and aspiration of the Guru's triple life is summed up in this one word :—“Sacrifice.”

Aurangzeb is the emperor of India. Great is his power and he is strong in his resolve to convert the Hindu nation to Islam. The Hindus tremble before the might of the

Moghul emperor. But this one man, Gobind,—young in years but strong in his faith in the *Akala Purukha*, the Deathless Spirit,—is fearless. The Guru says :—

*The Beloved hath sent me down!  
I come singing His Name :  
I go sowing the seed of the Eternal :  
My refuge is in Him,  
Who is the Steel of the blood of centuries,—  
Who is the Heart of all the Ages!*

\*

To understand the inner purpose of the Guru's great struggle, it is necessary to understand the inner purpose of the long reign of the Moghul emperor, Aurangzeb. It was a despotic and disruptive reign : and chaos followed it as soon as Aurangzeb died.

Some Muslims, it is true, worshipped him as a saint : they did not understand that his intolerance undid the work of Akbar the Great. Aurangzeb failed to win India to Islam : he failed in his efforts to eradicate from India all religions except Islam. His "successes" were superficial. All Hindu temples were razed to the ground : all Hindu schools were closed : all public Hindu worship was prohibited. Aurangzeb did but succeed in ruining his dynasty and his country.

Aurangzeb's death-bed letters are his "Confessions" and may still be read as a tragic commentary on the life and policy of a sovereign who failed because he was a fanatic. Aurangzeb wrote :—

"I know not who I am, where I shall go or what will happen to this sinner full of sins. My years have gone by thoughtless. God has been in my heart but my darkened eyes have not recognised His Light. I have



greatly sinned!"

\*

THREE of the most thrilling chapters in Indian history are those which tell how the Rajput, the Mahratta and the Sikh fought for freedom,—fought and won!

The Sikhs did not enter upon their historical mission without going through a period of preparation. A succession of great souls,—the Gurus,—for almost a century, helped the Sikhs to organise themselves into a strong Community.

The word "Guru" is a much-abused term. It calls up to many the associations of a "dictator." The original meaning of the word "Guru" is not a "dictator," but a "purifier." I do not think that, even politically, dictatorship has, today, a place in a sound theory of the State. Spiritually, dictatorship is, to my mind, a defunct conception.

The Guru is a purifier of life. A true Guru is one whose presence, *darshana*, fellowship (*sanga*), purifies us. The Guru is the great purifier. He purifies, for he sacrifices all he has and all he is to God the Eternal. Him Guru Gobind Singh adored as "my Gobind, my Mukunda,—the million-hearted One, the Infinite Mind, my Hari, my Beloved!"

\*

To his disciples,—the Khalsas,—the Guru said :—

*Bow down to the Life Divine  
That shines alike in the big, bulky elephant  
And in the little ant!  
The Life Divine that still doth bless  
The rich and the poor alike!  
Sons of the Khalsa!  
Bow we down to Him  
From whom the floods of life*

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Bow we down to Him  
From whom the floods of life*

*Come rolling down :  
Unto Him all will go and in Him will rest again!*

The great Guru invoked the "Hidden Life" as the "Great Fire" : and its "secret," he declared, was "sacrifice." "Hold it in your soul," he said to the Khalsa Brotherhood that he built for the service of India, the service of Man. "As long as this flame of sacrifice," he said to them, "burns unflickering in you, you are the real kings,"—of human hearts,—true "sons of the Khalsa." In a song which stirs my blood whenever I read it, the great Guru said :—

*Man is one!  
God is one!  
Love is one!  
One with the Light that shines within:  
One with Truth:  
One with Love!  
All else is passing,  
Is unsteady, fleeting!  
He lives who loves!*

Love flowed out of the great Guru to all,—not to Hindus alone but, also, to Muslims. For he saw, as the great seers and masters have ever seen, that "we are all the fruits of One Tree and the leaves of One Branch."

Being a "helpmate" to all, Guru Gobind Singh became a "sanctuary" to all. How pilgrims came to him from different parts and received his blessings at Anandpur! Revering him as their "Guru," they regarded him as "their way to Heaven."

\*

THINKING of Guru Gobind Singh, I have thought, again and again, of the patron saint of Russia,—Saint Sergius, —who, six hundred years ago, guarded his country in the



day of Russia's need when Tartar hordes threatened to invade and annihilate it. Sergius was a saint and he became the true "leader" of Russia. Sergius' master-word was "sacrifice." Speaking to his countrymen, he said :—

*By what shall you achieve?  
By a Power Divine!  
Shall I speak of "power"  
When folly and ignorance and vanity  
Strive for power?  
Yes : our power, the Power Divine,  
Is sacrifice.  
Know ye that herein is achievement,  
In the power of sacrifice :  
It is the creative power :  
Its spirit is unconquerable!*

Guru Gobind Singh was the great leader and the great inspirer of his people. I love to speak of him as a "Knight of the Spirit," who was a *bhakta*, too,—a lover of God,—a leader who was, also, a brother to all in need, a warrior who combined heroic courage with simplicity and both with the renunciation and humility of a saint.

The Brotherhood of the Khalsa was an Order which did wonderful work : every Khalsa was a "Singh," a "lion." The Khalsa Order was an army of "strong men," of heroes like the Ironsides of Cromwell. The Khalsa Order eschewed wine and tobacco and affirmed the great truth of the Brotherhood of man. And the Khalsa, believing profoundly in the One Father,—the *Akala Purukha*,—learnt, too, the truth,—reverence for the wisdom of the Saints enshrined in the *Guru Granth Saheb*.

My heart was grieved when I read the words of a scholarly Christian missionary :—"The *Granth Saheb* is worshipped like an idol in the Golden Temple at Amritsar."

No! the great Sikh Gurus and the great Sikh Scripture pealed, to an India that felt forlorn and weary, the message that God, the great Saviour, was not afar but was a "Brother and Friend,"—nigh to the heart of every one. "Within your bosom I reside and you reside in Me! Lo! we are one!" In this realisation is the great affirmation of the heart of India, and the supreme message of Guru Gobind Singh's life of sacrifice.

Centuries have passed since the great Guru came to point the path and lead his people in that hour of India's piteous need when Aurangzeb dreamt the dream of making India an "Empire of Islam." Piteous, too, is India's need, today. And India will achieve the true freedom for which her history waits, if we reconsecrate our daily life to the great resolve :—"Our power is sacrifice!"



## THE SONG OF THE GURU

GURU Gobind Singh sang a number of songs. A beautiful blend are they of the contemplative spirit and the spirit of reverence for the poor, the lowly, the outcast, and the broken, bleeding ones of humanity. Let me give a few selections from these songs. They have, I verily believe, a meaning and a message for the twentieth century.

*I bow down to Thee, O Life Divine!  
Thou dost move in the ant and the elephant alike:  
And Thou dost bless the poor and the rich alike!*

\*

*He stretches forth His Hands as a beggar for alms:  
Does He not, also, stand at the door  
As the one Giver who gives and gives and ever gives  
With His Hands full,—giving away His all to all?*

\*

*Him even the gods name by not naming:  
And Him the tiny blades of grass do praise unendingly!*

\*

*I salute Him, whom no waters can ever wet,  
Whom no sky can ever cover!  
Unstained is He by deeds and doing.  
He holds the orbs of heaven in His Hands:  
But He Himself stands on nothing!*

\*

*To this earth I came singing the Name:  
And I move on, sowing the seed of the Eternal!*

\*

*The truth I gave you, O Khalsas!  
Each one of you must find it for himself again.  
Turn not the truth of life into a dead creed!*

*The songs I gave you,—  
May they be your living temple!*

\*

*This be the teaching I give to you,—  
Let the sparrows of love destroy the eagles of hatred!  
New kingdoms are opened for you,  
New dynasties of life and love where there is no pain!*

\*

*Do they despise you ?  
Do they say you are low caste men ?  
Come, come to me,  
And I shall give you to wear  
The robes of joy !  
And the Fire of Heaven  
Shall I blend with your blood :  
And the very sun and moon  
Shall meet together  
To pay you homage !  
You are the chosen ones !  
And you that are servants of the poor,—  
You are the true Khalsa!*

\*

*Here is the ancient Light of the knowledge of God :  
Hold it in your hearts !  
Meditate on this supreme Flame !  
It is love : all else is illusion and death !*

\*

*Believe me, man is one, God is one, love is one,—  
One with the inner light,  
One with truth !*

\*

*Live ye in the Nama ! Live ye in the Silence !  
And he lives who loves,—none else, none else !*





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